

Message Text

SECRET

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11
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P R 011450Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7837
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PRAGUE 698

CANDIDATE IS MUTUAL ABOLITION OF CLOSED AREAS, TO WHICH THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS IMMEDIATE ATTENTION BE GIVEN. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, IF THE LONG-GRAVEL FREEZE STARTS TO THAW, WOULD BE NEGOTIATION OF A CULTURAL-SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL AGREEMENT. WE BELIEVE SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE IN THE US INTEREST, AND RECOMMEND THAT NEGOTIATIONS FOR IT BE UNDERTAKEN WHEN SOUNDINGS INDICATE THE THE CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE IS READY TO TALK.

(C) THIRDLY, WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO BRING PARTICULARLY DESERVING DIVIDED FAMILY CASES TO THE ATTENTION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

(D) WE SHOULD ALSO CONTINUE TO MENTION OBJECTIONABLE PRESS COVERAGE OF US AFFAIRS, LETTING THE CZECHOSLOVAKS KNOW THAT THEIR ATTITUDE IN THESE MATTERS DOES HAVE A TANGIBLE EFFECT ON US ATTITUDES.

(E) ON THE COMMERCIAL FRONT, WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE CZECHOSLOVAKS TO CONTINUE IN THEIR MODEERATE LINE AND NOT TO RETALIATE AGAINST US COMMERCIAL INTERESTS BECAUSE OF LONG-GRAVEL. WE SHOULD ALSO MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAM, WITH INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS CAREFULLY SELECTED TO MESH WITH GREATEST MARKET NEEDS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. HERE IT

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SEEMS IMPORTANT THAT MOMENTUM BUILT UP OVER THE PAST THREE OR FOUR YEARS NOT BE LOST THROUGH INDIRECTION.

6. A SPECIAL WORD NEEDS TO BE SAID ABOUT THE REOPENING OF OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN BRATISLAVA. THE CZECHOSLOVAKS HAVE BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO LINK TO REOPENING DIRECTLY TO SOME SPECIFIC STEP ON THE CLAIMS AGREEMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT THEIR DISPLEASURE ABOUT LONG-GRAVEL IS THE REASON FOR THE HOLDUP ON BRATISLAVA; BUT THEY HAVE KEPT THEIR HANDS FREE TO ALLOW MOVEMENT AS SOON AS THE ATMOSPHERE BEGINS TO CHANGE IN GENERAL. WE SHOULD KEEP THE REOPENING OF BRATISLAVA AS A MATTER OF URGENT DESIRE ON OUR PART, AND WE SHOULD REMIND THE CZECHOSLOVAKS DISCREETLY OF OUR INTEREST, LOOKING ALWAYS FOR SOME PEG ON WHICH TO HANG A PROPOSAL FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THIS QUESTION. IN THE MEANWHILE, THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD MAINTAIN NECESSARY RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS FOR BRATISLAVA, NOT ALLOWING OUR PLANS FOR REOPENING TO SINK INTO DESUETUDE BECAUSE OF A MOMENTARY POLITICAL HOLDUP. THE COMPLEXITY OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CZECH AND SLOVAKS IS A KEY FACTOR IN DOMESTIC POLITICS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND IT IS A MATTER OF GREAT US INTEREST TO HAVE A MISSION OPENED IN SLOVAKIA.

7. RESOURCES. CONSIDERING THE HOLDING PATTERN IN US-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS AT PRESENT, PRESENT STAFFING AND FUNDING ARE BASICALLY ADEQUATE FOR PURSUING OUR STATED GOALS. AFTER CONSIDERABLE EXAMINATION OF SECURITY PROBLEMS AT THE EMBASSY, WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE CHANGES IN 1975 OR 1976 IN PRESENT EMBASSY ACCESS PROCEDURES. ONE ADDITIONAL LOCAL EMPLOYEE WOULD BE REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT THESE PLANS, AND RELOCATION OF THE TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD (INVOLVING POSSIBLE ACQUISITION OF A NEW BOARD) WOULD ALSO BE NECESSARY. AS IMPLIED ABOVE, RESOURCES FOR REOPENING OF BRATISLAVA SHOULD BE HELD AVAILABLE AT LEAST FOR FY 1977.

8. WE DO NOT ACCEPT THE PRESENT HOLD ON STEPS TO IMPROVE US-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS AS NORMAL. THE TRADE ACT, ESPECIALLY LONG-GRAVEL, WAS INDEED A COLD SHOWER FOR THE CZECHOSLOVAKS; BUT THEY, LIKE THE SOVIETS, REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE BASIC DETENTE STRATEGY, AND THEY DO NOT WANT CZECHOSLOVAKIA EXCLUDED FROM THE BENEFITS DETENTE WITH THE US COULD BRING THEM. IT IS TRUE THAT NO ONE CAN POINT SPECIFICALLY TO ANY-
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THING USEFUL CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAS DONE RECENTLY FOR THE UNITED STATES. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THE EUPHORIC PERIOD BETWEEN THE JULY INITIALLING OF THE CLAIMS AGREEMENT AND THE SEPTEMBER INTRODUCTION OF LONG-GRAVEL WAS TOO SHORT TO ALLOW MORE THAN ASSURANCES THAT PROGRESS IN OTHER FIELDS WOULD FOLLOW. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT ONCE A WAY IS FOUND AROUND THE TRADE ACT IMPASSE, CONCRETE EVIDENCES OF CZECHOSLOVAK

WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE BILATERALLY WITH US WILL BE READILY
SEEN. OUR BASIC AIM HERE NOW, THEN, IS TO KEEP THE ATMOSPHERE
FROM DETERIORATING; TO TAKE WHATEVER SMALL STEPS WE CAN TO
SHOW INTEREST IN SPECIFIC US-CZECHOSLOVAK COOPERATION; TO
ASSURE THE CZECHOSLOVAKS, DISCREETLY AND AS
OPPORTUNITIES ARISE, THAT WE WANT TO GET AROUND THE PRESENT
IMPASSE; AND FINALLY, TO WORK BEHIND THE SCENES AS PROMPTLY AS
CIRCUMSTANCES ALLOW TO PREPARE FOR RENEGOTIATION OF THE
CLAIMS AGREEMENT AND RESUMPTION OF FORWARD MOVEMENT IN OUR
RELATIONS WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
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